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ABSTRACT

The National Commission on Secondary Schooling for Hispanics (NCSSH) has found that secondary schooling for most Hispanics is not preparing them to assume productive and satisfying adult lives. This paper discusses whether the current or proposed reforms and strategies are meeting, or can meet, the needs and potential of Hispanic youth. It is divided into three parts. Part 1 provides a demographic rationale for paying greater attention to the education problems of Hispanic youth and describes four types of Hispanic students in terms of school performance and other factors. Part 2 focuses on educational policy developments in the five States visited by the NCSSH--those with the largest Hispanic populations. Following a discussion of the status, origin and drawbacks of different kinds of reforms, this part offers a focused examination of the effects of the different reforms on the different types of students introduced in Part 1. Part 3 discusses the inadequacy of current reforms and offers suggestions for changes beyond the ones that already have been implied. Not until a school has an orderly climate and the beginning of a school culture of concern for everyone can the school faculty begin to raise academic standards and expectations of students. A five-page reference list concludes the document. (ETS)

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MUST THEY WAIT ANOTHER GENERATION?

HISPANICS AND SECONDARY SCHOOL REFORM

by

Rafael Valdivieso

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by

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INTRODUCTION

No dream is so dear to Americans as the possibility of a society that is completely open to ambitious people. But when we wake, the realities of class and race are difficult to face. Perhaps this is why we are willing to leave the study of realities to specialists — and to draw from them the kind of uneasy compromise that we call public policy. But ambiguity has its uses. We must be free to tell children that hard work and education will find their reward. Young blacks and chicanos must be persuaded to wait another generation, always another generation.

Joan W. Moore, 1981

A shocking proportion of this generation of Hispanic young people is being wasted because their educational needs are neither understood nor met, their aspirations are unrecognized, their promising potential is stunted. This was the fundamental finding of the National Commission on Secondary Schooling for Hispanics (NCSSH), which was created to find out why so many inner-city public high schools are not more successful in educating Hispanics.

Secondary schooling for most Hispanics is not preparing them to assume productive and satisfying adult lives. Recent studies give us a picture of the severity of the problem. Almost 50 percent of the Hispanics who took the U.S. Department of Education's "High School and Beyond" achievement tests in both 1980 and 1982 scored in the lowest quartile of those tested (NCSSH, 1984, p.32). Of all Hispanic 20- to 24-year-olds, 40 percent are not high school graduates; the comparable figure for Puerto Ricans on the mainland is 46 percent (Bureau of the Census, 1985).

We can disagree on the causes of as well as the remedies for the social trauma these dreary statistics represent, but we can be certain that the poor educational preparation Hispanic youths are receiving will rebound on their communities and cities in a costly and negative fashion unless a determined effort is made to reverse the situation.

In the last two years we have lived through an extraordinary period of critique and reform in American schooling. It is, of course, still too early to say whether these reforms will meet with success. The reforms have been initiated mostly on the state level. They have been focused, for the most part, on instilling academic rigor in the schooling of American students and upgrading the quality of the American teaching force. Even though some have warned from the beginning of this current reform movement that the reforms might aggravate the high dropout rates already prevalent among some youth, especially Hispanics and blacks, it has only been recently that legislators and other influentials

have begun to be concerned with the "other side of excellence," those students who presumably are not motivated or able to do well in school. While no clear consensus has evolved among those concerned with either the diagnosis or the solution of these youths' problems, one disturbing option proposed is that alternative systems be implemented on behalf of those students who are unable to maintain the pace within the newly upgraded academic environment. These proposed systems include remediation and work programs, as well as youth service programs that will enhance youths' sense of self-worth and civic duty to others as they learn work skills and earn stipends. But, significantly, most of these programs would not be conducted by the schools.

Good arguments can be made for such programs, and they should be part of the repertoire of programs available to all youth. But to turn to such programs as our basic policy for dropouts and potential dropouts is grossly irresponsible. Our primary policy thrust for such youngsters should be to implement school reforms along with the current wave of excellence reforms that will shape schools which do not need to create a group of "losers" in order to produce a group of "winners." Some readers may find this a romantic notion. They will say one cannot teach those who are either unable to learn or do not want to. Indeed, some say our schools have fallen to a state of "mediocrity" because we allowed a low academic denominator to prevail during the past several years in order to absorb all the children and youth from groups historically excluded from full participation in our schools. Consequently, in their eyes, we face a policy dilemma in American schooling. They would say one simply cannot expect to upgrade the academic environment of schools and at the same time expect youngsters who could not make it in the more relaxed environment of the recent past to remain in school under the new circumstances. The problem with this line of argument is its assumption that most students have been afforded a chance to learn more or less the same academic skills/knowledge and some have simply come up short. This is decidedly not the case for many students, especially minority students and the poor.

A majority of Hispanic students have not had access, for a number of reasons, to a curriculum that prepares them for either higher education or for decent jobs in the primary labor market. Equally important, many students are not being prepared to be informed and active adult citizens in our democracy. In short, I am in accord with the John Goodlad hypothesis (1984, p.90) that "at least at the secondary level, the institution of schooling, as presently conceived and operated, is not capable of providing large numbers of our young people with the education they and this democracy require now and in the future." We must continue the reforms of our schools with the goal of excellence for all and not just for some. Alternative programs, then, can still be considered for those

youngsters who need additional opportunity to develop productive and responsible adult lives. These programs should be developed within a broad range of school-to-work policies in our society for those who are not immediately bound for a post-secondary degree.

Essentially, this paper is about whether the current or proposed reforms and strategies are working, or can work, to meet the needs and potential of Hispanic youth. The paper is divided into three parts. Part One provides a demographic rationale for paying greater attention to the education problems of Hispanic youth and describes four types of Hispanic students in terms of school performance and other factors. Part Two focuses on education policy developments in the five states visited by the National Commission on Secondary Schooling for Hispanics as part of its study. The five states, California, Florida, Illinois, New York, and Texas, contain 70 percent of the country's Hispanic population. Regional data that include Hispanic students from these five states and their neighboring states as well as the Mountain region are also used. These six regions together contain about 95 percent of the Hispanic population. Part Three is a discussion of some of the main issues raised in the first two parts.

Most of the data used in this paper are derived from the massive High School and Beyond data base of the National Center for Education Statistics. High School and Beyond (HSB) is a national longitudinal survey of persons who were high school sophomores and seniors in Spring, 1980, for the purpose of studying the educational and occupational plans and activities of young people as they pass through the American educational system and take on their adult roles. About 58,000 students were sampled in 1980. Data were also collected in 1982 and 1984 and will continue to be collected at two-year intervals during this decade. Of special interest are the students who dropped out of school between 1980 and 1982 but were included in the follow-up surveys. Questionnaires and cognitive tests were administered to each student in the sample. The student questionnaire covered school and work experiences, activities, attitudes, plans, selected background characteristics, and language proficiency.

Some of the data and analyses have been stretched to their limits in order to make certain points, but the data are presented in enough detail for others to draw their own conclusions. The momentum and direction of policy trends are such that discussions about the issues raised by these trends are needed now. Policymakers on all levels and throughout the country are anxious to see the results of the reforms they enacted, and are prepared to entertain discussions about the changes their reforms are producing. In short, this paper falls within the tradition wherein the policy analyst gives his or her "best shot" or judgment on policy developments and options within the constraints of time, available data, and practicality.

PART ONE: THE NEED FOR REFORM IN SECONDARY SCHOOLING OF HISPANICS

This section begins with demographic data that have implications for Hispanic education, and then develops profiles of four types of Hispanic students based on their academic performance on the secondary level: (1) high school graduate and college enrollee; (2) average high school graduate but not immediately or even eventually college-bound; (3) the at-risk or below-average student; and (4) the dropout.

Demographics, Economic Transformation, and Societal Well-being

Hispanics are the youngest and fastest growing population in the country. The rapid growth is due to the youthfulness and high birth rate of the group as well as to continuing immigration. The average white in this country is about 31 years old; the average black, 25; and the average Hispanic, 22. If one considers that the peak childbearing years are from 21 to 29, it becomes clearer why the three groups will continue to have different growth patterns in the future. Without including Puerto Rico as a possible new state, Hispanics will outnumber blacks at some point between the years 2005 and 2015 (McNett, 1983).

But this is only part of the picture. Because of a steep decline in the overall national fertility rate from 3.7 in 1957 to 1.8 in 1982, seven million fewer young people will reach working age in the 1990s than did so in the 1970s. Hispanic and black youth will constitute ever-increasing segments of successive youth cohorts for the foreseeable future (Pifer, 1982).

At the same time, the white portion of the national population will not only decline from 80 percent in 1980 to perhaps 65 percent by 2020, but also will grow steadily older (Davis et al., 1983). As the population ages and greater numbers retire for longer periods of time, the need to avoid the waste of talent and productivity among smaller numbers of younger workers will become more dramatic.

The need for younger workers also foretells the continuation of large-scale immigration into this country, regardless of what legislation may be passed. That is, we may gain some control over our borders but we will continue to receive about a million immigrants a year into this country for the rest of the century. Because of world wide population trends, the large bulk of the new immigrants will add to the numbers of Hispanics and racial minorities in this country. Already, all but two of the twenty-five largest school systems have numerical majorities of minorities. The Texas school population is about 50 percent minority. By the beginning of the next century, California will likely have a majority of minorities in its total population.

Nationally, 85 percent of Hispanics reside in metropolitan areas, which,

excepting the much smaller Asian population, makes Hispanics the most highly urbanized population in the United States. Because of the geographic concentration of Hispanics in a number of urban centers, they will become the majority of the school population and the eventual majority of the work force in those areas. For example, by 1995 the Hispanic percentage of the total 15- to 19-year-old population in the Los Angeles and San Antonio metropolitan areas will be over 45 percent and almost 60 percent, respectively. The comparable percentages for the largest metropolitan areas east of the Mississippi are not as high but still are substantial: New York, 26 percent; Chicago, 15 percent; and Miami, about 40 percent (NCSSH, 1984).

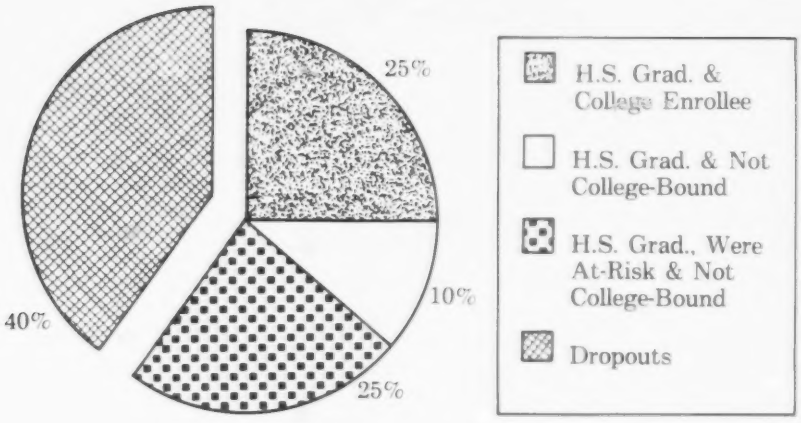
The national and regional economies are undergoing a series of structural changes that more and more will require the kind of attitudes and skills that only a solid education can provide. Unlike some other recent reports on the needed skills for our future labor market, educator Bill Honig makes the convincing argument that "we are moving from a work force in which 38 percent have the computation, speaking, writing and thinking skills associated heretofore with the college-bound to a labor market in which nearly half the new hires will be expected to be so qualified" (1985, p.214). He concludes, "we should be attempting to educate at least two-thirds to three-quarters of our students to these higher levels of academic achievement." Just a strong back or nimble fingers will no longer do for entry-level work in economies that are moving away from traditional manufacturing to service, technical, and information industries. Already three-quarters of the major corporations are spending considerable funds in basic remedial education for their entry-level employees (English, 1985). This trend will only continue to grow unless there is a drastic improvement in schooling for all our youth.

In some cities, then, the future of the public education and the prosperity of commerce, industry, the arts, and the community generally will be linked to the fate of Hispanics. Thus, the need to invest in the preparation and development of Hispanic and black youth must go beyond equity and become one of societal self-interest. We can no longer afford as a society the luxury of maintaining an urban underclass. Minority youths must become well-informed, active citizens, productive employees, and aware consumers.

Hispanic Student Types

The Hispanic high school senior cohort for 1982 can be divided on the basis of a variety of data into four categories: (1) high school graduate and college enrollee; (2) average high school graduate but not immediately or even eventually college-bound; (3) at-risk or below average student who manages to graduate; and (4) dropout. The estimated portions of each type for the entire cohort are displayed here.

Figure 1. Hispanic Student Types, 1982 Estimates



The College Enrollee and the Average High School Graduate. Forty-three percent of Hispanic high school graduates enrolled in college in 1982, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (1983, p.3). This represents approximately 25 percent of the total Hispanic cohort, including dropouts, for that year. Many college-bound Hispanics are poorly prepared for higher education and are beset by a number of problems, but they will not be discussed further here as a separate group. Suffice it to say that in recent years over half of this group drops out of college before completion of a four-year degree.

The second type of student, approximately 10 percent of the 1982 cohort, is a residual category for the students who are left after one subtracts the college-bound students, the below-average students, and the dropouts from the whole cohort.

Taking the first two types of students together, they account for about 35 percent of the total cohort or about 57 to 60 percent of the Hispanics who graduated from high school in 1982. Based on assumptions derived from High School and Beyond (HSB) survey data, the overwhelming bulk, perhaps 75 percent, of these two types of students reported average grades (B, B&C) and scored in the 2nd and 3rd quartiles of the national results of the HSB sophomore achievement tests. Approximately 25 percent of these students scored in the highest quartile on the HSB achievement tests or reported above-average grades (A, A&B). Put another way, only about 15 percent of the Hispanics who graduated in 1982 could be considered above average by either their achievement test scores or their self-reported grade average.

The At-Risk Student. The third type of student, approximately 25 percent of the entire cohort or 43 percent of those who graduated in 1982, has been a below-average achiever but managed to complete high school. At least three variables in the High School and Beyond data base can be used to describe this type of student among the Hispanic 1980 sophomores who were still in school in the spring of 1982. Nearly half (48 percent) of the Hispanic students scored in the lowest quartile of the national results of High School and Beyond (Valdivieso & Galindo, 1984, p.62); 51 percent earned below-average grades (C,D,F) compared to 39 percent of the non-Hispanic whites in the national sample (Owings, & Fetters, 1984); and about 40 percent were enrolled in both remedial English and mathematics in their sophomore year (Valdivieso & Galindo, 1984, p.60). If we can assume approximate overlap among the group of students who fared poorly on each of these indicators, then let us assume that for practicality about 43 percent of the in-school Hispanics or about 25 percent of the entire cohort were this type of student in 1982. It is important to realize that dropouts have been excluded from these figures. These percentages represent the at-risk survivors who made it to the spring of their senior year.

We can assume that many of these students were in non-academic programs, while the rest were in general (40 percent) or vocational education (35 percent) programs. Presumably, a good portion of the students in the academic program would be average and above-average achievers or type one and two students. The assumption that there should be comparable percentages of above-average students in vocational, general education, and academic programs is mistaken, as we will soon see. In any case, by the last semester in high school, Hispanics in the HSB sample were taking fewer academic courses than any other group of students.

As participants in the High School and Beyond longitudinal survey, almost 26,000 of the sophomores who took a battery of school-related achievement tests in 1980 retook the same tests two years later in the spring of 1982. Over 4,600 of the original participants identified themselves as Hispanics and about 81 percent of them were still attending school in 1982. An important indicator of the drop in Hispanic enrollment in academic courses during the last two high school years is that the Hispanic scores the second time on the same test fell even further below the norm (see Table 1).

Table 1. In-School Hispanic 1980 Sophomores: Average Achievement Test Scores[1]

HSB TEST	1980	1982
VOCABULARY	44.8	42.5
READING	45.0	43.1
MATH 1	45.1	43.0
MATH 2	46.6	43.9
SCIENCE	44.9	42.9
WRITING	44.8	43.0
CIVICS	45.9	43.5

[1]Scores have been standardized to a mean of 50 and a standard deviation of 10.
Source: Valdivieso & Galindo, 1984, p. 63; tabulation from High School and Beyond Survey.

Mean achievement scores, along with a breakdown of school program participation for Hispanics in each of the six most Hispanic-populated regions, are presented in Table 2 in order to discern patterns between the scores and program participation.

Because the achievement scores are standardized within each region, direct comparisons between regions should be avoided. However, some generalizations can still be made. In general, the regions with the highest mean scores, Pacific and Middle Atlantic, have the largest percentages of Hispanics in academic programs and the lowest percentages in vocational programs. Conversely, the regions with the lowest mean scores, South Atlantic and West South Central, have the largest percentages of Hispanics in vocational programs and, excluding the Mountain region, the smallest percentages in academic programs. The Mountain region is an anomaly in that it has the largest percentage, almost 50 percent, of Hispanics in general programs along with nearly the lowest percentage in academic programs, and yet the region's achievement score is rather high. Generally, then, higher achievement scores are associated with higher academic program participation and lower participation in vocational programs. The converse of this is also true: the higher the participation in vocational programs, the lower the scores.

While it may be obvious that the less students enroll in academic programs the lower their scores will be on standardized achievement tests, it may not be so obvious that participation in vocational and general education programs can also be associated with poor grade averages.

Table 2. Mean Achievement Scores & High School Program for In-School Hispanics, by Region: Spring, 1982

REGION[1]	ACHIEVEMENT TESTS MEAN SCORE[2]	STD DEV	% IN HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM ACADEMIC	GENERAL	VOCATIONAL
MIDDLE ATLANTIC	47.6	8.5	36.7	35.3	28.0
SOUTH ATLANTIC	43.6	7.7	25.5	33.4	41.1
WEST SOUTH CENTRAL	43.8	7.9	20.5	34.5	45.0
EAST NORTH CENTRAL	45.4	7.6	28.5	34.6	36.9
MOUNTAIN	46.5	7.2	20.9	48.3	30.8
PACIFIC	48.0	8.0	29.4	43.1	27.5

[1]Regional Codes (States Arranged in descending order of Hispanic population):
Middle Atlantic (NY, NJ, PA)
South Atlantic (FL, VA, GA, NC, SC, DC, WV, DE)
West South Central (TX, LA, OK, AR)
East North Central (IL, MI, OH, IN, WI)
Mountain (NM, AZ, CO, UT, ID, WY, MT)
Pacific (CA, WA, HI, OR, AK)

[2]The mean score for all students who took the tests in each region is 50.

Source: Unpublished tabulation from High School and Beyond Survey, National Center for Education Statistics.

According to an analysis (West et al., 1985) of course-taking patterns of the High School and Beyond data, 22 percent of students who were concentrators (four or more credits in a single vocational program) or 19 percent of the limited concentrators (four or more credits in vocational education but less than four in a single instructional program) reported overall grade averages of B or more. Yet, 36 percent of samplers (1 to 3 credits) and 46 percent of non-participants (no credit) reported overall grade averages of B or more. The comparison between students in general education and all other students who reported overall grade averages of B or more is not much better: general education, 19 percent; and all other, 34 percent. We have not tabulated the Hispanic HSB grade averages by program participation, but, again, for the purposes of this discussion we can assume that a majority of the at-risk Hispanics were in the non-academic tracks or programs and had below-average grades.

The Dropout. The fourth category, approximately 40 percent of the

cohort, is comprised of the dropouts. A number of methods are available to derive an estimate for the dropouts in the 1982 cohort, but probably the least complicated is to use as a proxy the latest figure for 20 to 24-year-old Hispanics who are neither high school graduates nor enrolled in school. The figure is 40 percent, according to the Bureau of the Census (1985).

Other indicators of a high dropout rate among Hispanics can be obtained from local reports and the High School and Beyond data base. In numerous metropolitan areas, the media and others report alarming Hispanic dropout rates: Los Angeles, 50 percent (Arreola, 1983); San Antonio, 23 percent (Vasquez, 1983), Miami, 32 percent (Martinez, 1984); Chicago, 70 percent (Shipp, 1984); and New York, 80 percent (Maeroff, 1983). Unfortunately, dropout figures from different localities often cannot be compared with each other because of differences in how dropouts are defined or how the data are collected. About the only general statements that can be made about local data are that Hispanic rates are high and that these rates are usually the highest for any group in the specific localities.

A dropout in the longitudinal High School and Beyond survey is someone who was in school as a sophomore in the spring of 1980, but was no longer in school at the time of the first follow-up survey in the spring of 1982. The following rates are based on this definition.

Table 3. National Dropout Rates Among High School Students in 1982

OVERALL NATIONAL RATES		HISPANIC SUBGROUP RATES	
Hispanic	18.7%	Puerto Rican	22.9%
Black	17.1%	Mexican American	21.2%
White	12.5%	Cuban American	19.4%
U.S. Average	13.7%	Other Hispanic	11.4%

Source: Valdivieso & Galindo, 1984, p. 57; tabulation from High School and Beyond Survey.

It is important to realize that these figures do not include students who dropped out before the spring semester of the 10th grade. Many Hispanics reach age 16 before they get to the 10th grade. About 40 percent of all Hispanic students who leave school would do so before reaching their sophomore year, according to a report prepared for the National Center for Education Statistics by Hirano-Nakanishi (1983). Clearly, Hispanics are dropping out at high rates by any account.

Comparing the 1980 average scores of the in-school students in Table 1 and the prospective out-of-school students in Table 4 on each of the subtests, the Math 2 and Civics scores are not so dissimilar and the Vocabulary score is actually higher for the prospective dropout. A comparison between the dropouts and the at-risk students would probably indicate even fewer dissimilarities, but that disaggregation of the data is not immediately available.

Table 4. Out-Of-School Hispanic 1980 Sophomores:[1] Average Achievement Test Scores[2]

HSB TEST	1980	1982
VOCABULARY	45.2	35.2
READING	42.3	36.7
MATH 1	41.5	35.6
MATH 2	44.1	38.1
SCIENCE	41.4	36.3
WRITING	40.9	35.3
CIVICS	44.1	37.3

[1]Refers to 1980 Sophomores who were in school in 1980 but were not in 1982.
[2]Scores have been standardized to a mean of 50 and a standard deviation of 10.
Source: Valdivieso & Galindo, 1984, p. 63; tabulation from High School and Beyond Survey.

While the scores on the different tests should not be directly compared, it is apparent that the scores for the prospective dropouts show a variability not found among the scores for the in-school Hispanics. As we will see shortly, Hispanic dropouts in the High School and Beyond survey cited poor grades more often as the reason for leaving school. Because deficiencies in basic academic skills loom as a major factor in poor grades, one can only speculate what percentage of the prospective dropouts might have stayed in school with a greater emphasis on writing, reading, math, and science in their coursework. The countervailing argument, of course, is that more emphasis on academic skills and content would only push out these students. We will return to this apparent dilemma in Part 3.

The dramatic decline in the average scores for the dropouts in the spring of 1982 is obvious and understandable because the dropouts might not have attended school since the spring of 1980. The decline represents a deterioration in academic skills that is naturally lamentable, for it means even less of a foundation to build on in either the world of work or in further school work.

Table 5 indicates mean achievement scores along with a breakdown of former school program participation for Hispanic dropouts in each of the six most Hispanic-populated regions in the spring of 1982. The mean scores in Tables 2 and 5 are not comparable to those displayed in Tables 1 and 4, respectively, because the scores in Tables 2 and 5 are standardized within each region and the mean scores consist of only some tests.

Table 5. Mean Achievement Scores and Former High School Program For Out-of-High School Hispanics, by Region, Spring, 1982

REGION[1]	ACHIEVEMENT TESTS MEAN SCORE[2]	STD DEV	% IN HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM ACADEMIC	GENERAL	VOCATIONAL
MIDDLE ATLANTIC	39.7	5.3	23.8	46.7	29.5
SOUTH ATLANTIC	40.8	5.7	6.5	59.5	34.0
WEST SOUTH CENTRAL	40.2	5.2	7.8	47.4	44.8
EAST NORTH CENTRAL	41.0	6.4	11.7	61.6	26.7
MOUNTAIN	42.8	6.8	.0	68.1	31.9
PACIFIC	41.7	6.3	1.7	67.6	30.7

[1]Regional Codes (States arranged in descending order of Hispanic population):
Middle Atlantic (NY, NJ, PA)
South Atlantic (FL, VA, MD, GA, NC, SC, DC, WV, DE)
West South Central (TX, LA, OK, AR)
East North Central (IL, MI, OH, IN, WI)
Mountain (NM, AZ, CO, UT, ID, WY, MT)
Pacific (CA, WA, HI, OR, AK)

[2]The mean score for all students who took the tests in each region is 50.

Source: unpublished tabulation from High School and Beyond Survey. National Center for Education Statistics.

The Middle Atlantic region has the dual distinction of being the region with the most in-school Hispanics in academic programs and the largest percentage of dropouts who had been in academic programs before dropping out of school. In general, the other regions had considerably lower portions of dropouts who had been in academic programs.

The Pacific and Mountain regions had the remarkable distinction of having virtually no dropouts from their academic programs. This is especially noteworthy in the case of the Pacific region because, except for the Middle Atlantic region, it had the largest percentage of Hispanics in academic programs of any region. The Pacific and Mountain regions have another distinction among the six regions: the highest percentages of dropouts who were in general education programs — 67.6 and 68.1 percent, respectively. General education programs are the source of the most dropouts in the six regions and, except for the West South Central region, they are so by a large margin. Actually, 56 percent of all

Hispanic dropouts in the HSB sample were in general programs while only 8 percent were in academic programs. Why this should be so is not clear. One likely answer is that general programs have the least clear goals and objectives. Academic programs are seen as preparing the student for college. Vocational education programs are seen as preparing the student for the world of work. It is not at all clear for what general education prepares. It allows the student to take "watered-down" or less rigorous academic courses such as general math, general science, and general English as well as a variety of electives to presumably capture the flagging interest of the student. In this sense, one might say that the purpose of general education is to retain academically deficient or unmotivated students in high school until they graduate. It is not actually apparent whether the lack of clear goals and structure is what hastens the departure of the student or whether general programs simply attract the least motivated and academically prepared students. In any case, the student may feel rudderless and hopeless about catching up and ever doing better in school. Combine this vagueness of purpose and the probability of poor grades with the reality of needing to earn an income and of family-related demands or concerns, and it is not difficult to see why Hispanics in general education leave school more often. Students who consider themselves failures in school can at least feel better about themselves in some endeavors outside the school.

High school dropouts in general are said to have a rather typical profile. Table 6 displays a number of similar patterns in the reasons which Hispanics and non-Hispanic whites in the HSB survey gave for leaving high school, but illustrates differences in emphases within the patterns that are often overlooked in discussing dropouts.

Table 6. Reasons Reported by White and Hispanic 1980 Sophomores for Leaving High School, by Sex, 1982

REASON	MALE WHITE	MALE HISPANIC	FEMALE WHITE	FEMALE HISPANIC
SCHOOL-RELATED	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
SCHOOL WAS NOT FOR ME	46	25	34	24
HAD POOR GRADES	38	34	30	32
COULDN'T GET ALONG WITH TEACHERS	20	17	10	12
EXPELLED OR SUSPENDED	12	17	6	4
DIDN'T GET INTO DESIRED PROGRAM	5	7	4	5
FAMILY-RELATED				
MARRIED OR PLAN TO	8	10	36	33
WAS PREGNANT	N/A	N/A	21	25
HAD TO SUPPORT FAMILY	9	17	7	11
WORK-RELATED				
OFFERED A JOB AND CHOSE TO WORK	28	26	10	13

Notes: Students could report more than one reason.
Several reasons are not displayed here because of low response rates.
Percentages have been rounded off.

Sources: White figures are from Table 5.2 in Plisko, 1984, p. 156; Hispanic figures are from Valdivieso & Galindo, 1984, p. 63; tabulations from High School and Beyond Survey.

While white males most frequently indicated that they did not like school, Hispanic males most often cited poor grades. White females cited marriage and a dislike of school; Hispanic females indicated marriage and poor grades. In keeping with other studies, poor grades is the most commonly cited reason by both Hispanic males and females.

Overall, the most striking differences between whites and Hispanics were that whites indicated considerably more disaffection toward school than Hispanics; and that Hispanics cited the need to support their families more often. The different rates for the disaffection or alienation factor are important to note, because it is often said that if youngsters don't like or want to be in school, then nothing can be done for them in a regular school setting until they have changed their attitude. This sentiment is probably correct more often than not, but it is the wholesale application of it to the bulk of dropouts that can create misleading implications for policy. While almost half of the white males and a third of the females indicated dislike for school, only a quarter of either Hispanic males or females cited this reason.

Beyond some of the important differences in reasons cited for leaving school among whites and Hispanics, there are clear differences in cited reasons among Hispanic dropouts in the six regions with the largest Hispanic populations listed in Table 7.

Further research and analysis would be required before any definitive remarks could be made about the factors that account for the variability across the six regions in the reasons given for leaving school. However, some obvious differences should be pointed out. The biggest differences among school-related reasons occur with "couldn't get along with teachers" and "poor grades." It is not clear at all how much different school policies might account for regional differences on the first reason, but the differences on poor grades will be explored later with other data. The regional differences on pregnancy as a cause for leaving school are so great that only varying policies on pregnant students in school, and the availability of sex education, contraceptives, and abortion services, could account for the differences. The regional differences for a job offer as a reason can probably be most readily explained by varying labor market conditions.

Across the different regions, "poor grades" continues to be the prime reason given by Hispanic dropouts for leaving school in all but two cases: the South Atlantic responses for poor grades and a job offer are even; and the East North Central response for pregnancy is the highest response for any reason by Hispanics of either sex.

At least two conclusions for policymakers can be drawn from this discussion of at-risk students and dropouts. First, the range of reasons given for leaving school and the lack of a single overwhelming reason should be sufficient cause for discouraging the enactment of wholesale national

Table 7. Reasons Reported by Hispanic 1980 Sophomores for Leaving High School, by Region: 1982

REASON	TOTAL	REGIONS[1] 1	2	3	4	5	6
SCHOOL-RELATED	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
HAD POOR GRADES	33	37	26	35	38	37	35
SCHOOL WAS NOT FOR ME	25	29	23	20	22	41	28
COULDN'T GET ALONG WITH TEACHERS	15	24	17	11	16	15	10
EXPELLED OR SUSPENDED	11	13	12	10	16	23	7
DIDN'T GET INTO DESIRED PROGRAM	6	10	6	7	3	4	6
FAMILY-RELATED							
MARRIED OR PLAN TO	20	17	20	20	25	21	20
WAS PREGNANT (FEMALES ONLY)	25	21	16	22	46	10	29
HAD TO SUPPORT FAMILY	14	21	13	13	6	13	17
WORK-RELATED							
OFFERED A JOB AND CHOSE TO WORK	20	25	26	24	3	21	16

[1]Regional Codes (States arranged in descending order of Hispanic population):
1 = Middle Atlantic (NY, NJ, PA)
2 = South Atlantic (FL, VA, MD, GA, NC, SC, DC, WV, DE)
3 = West South Central (TX, LA, OK, AR)
4 = East North Central (IL, MI, OH, IN, WI)
5 = Mountain (NM, AZ, CO, UT, ID, WY, MT)
6 = Pacific (CA, WA, HI, OR, AK)

Notes: Student could report more than one reason.
Several reasons are not displayed here because of low response rates.
Percentages have been rounded off.

Source: Unpublished tabulation from High School and Beyond Survey. National Center for Education Statistics.

policies. Rather, sensitive policies should be crafted by localities to meet local needs. Such policies would not preclude national policies to augment local policies in resources, information, and research. And second, the prevalence of poor grades as a reason for leaving school among Hispanic dropouts and the extent of poor grades among Hispanic at-risk students make poor grades or academic underachievement one of the leading problems to overcome in the secondary schooling of Hispanics, and do warrant state and national attention.

Language

One might well ask at this point: how does the problem of language fit into this situation? Isn't the problem of limited proficiency in English the main cause of low academic achievement and dropping-out for Hispanics? A few comments on this topic are in order. Yes, language does play a part, but the situation is more complex than would seem apparent. By the time Hispanics reach the 9th or 10th grade, their language difficulties in earlier years may have caused them to be retained a year or two in earlier grades. Almost 25 percent of all Hispanics enter high school overage (Brown, et. al, 1980). Hence, they are behind their age contemporaries in school and ahead of their grade peers in physical and emotional development. Combined with other factors such as poor grades and attraction to work, being overage frequently results in students dropping out of school. Yet, because the complexity of this situation is not usually captured in surveys of dropouts, the language factor does not loom as large in the survey results. More research is needed to tease out the factors and their interrelations in this situation.

Except for Hispanics who immigrate into the country as adolescents and now often receive some special language assistance, the language problems of most Hispanics who stay in school are simply ignored, or acknowledged but not addressed, by the high schools they attend. For example, as part of the ongoing debate over the effects of public vs. private schooling, Morgan (1983) analyzed data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth Labor Market Behavior. He found that, once appropriate background and curriculum controls were introduced, enrollment in private schools has only one significant effect on cognitive achievement, and that is on the verbal achievement of Hispanic youth, specifically their word knowledge and other paragraph comprehension scores. Morgan concludes that the Catholic and other private high schools that Hispanics attend "may do a better job than public schools in dealing with the special verbal needs of Hispanic students" (p.196).

Hispanics should also be strongly encouraged to become literate in the Spanish language. Only 4.4 percent of 1982 Hispanic seniors in the High School and Beyond survey studied three or more years of Spanish—almost the same as the 3.6 percentage of the entire national

sample who did likewise (Valdivieso and Galindo, 1984, p.61). The observations of the National Commission on Secondary Schooling for Hispanics (1984, p.38) in regard to how Hispanic parents view the language situation are instructive: "Hispanic parents are staunch supporters of solid English instruction. What they do object to are instructional approaches to learning English that deprive their children of Spanish, which often is the language of communication in their families. Parents fear that they will not be able to guide their youth and pass on their values. In addition, Hispanic parents recognize that wider employment opportunities and better paying jobs are available to individuals who are literate in both Spanish and English."

What is so notable about these language problems is that while broadly accepted policies to address them still have not been developed, controversies over the issues have obscured the other problems Hispanics face in education.

To conclude Part One, I have attempted to delineate different types of students based on their academic performance and school status, and apply the typology to the 1982 senior cohort of Hispanics. Because the presumed negative consequences of the current reforms are usually raised in the context of increasing dropout rates, we have focused on at-risk students who have managed to stay in school and on dropouts. Not only have a large portion of Hispanics done poorly in school, but many of these same students have also been concentrating in the general and vocational education programs. As will be shown in later sections, these programs are going to be curtailed if, in fact, the current reforms have any effect in instilling more academic rigor. How will these changes affect the at-risk students? All together, I estimate the at-risk and dropout portions of the 1982 senior cohort of Hispanics at about 65 percent—a staggering percentage in human terms.

PART TWO:
CURRENT POLICY TRENDS IN FIVE STATES

This section discusses the reforms which have been initiated or are being considered among the five states with the largest Hispanic populations. The tables in this part, listing the reforms, are composed of information drawn from surveys of state officials conducted by *Education Week* ("Excellence," 1985; "Lawmakers bolster . . .," 1985), the National Commission on Excellence in Education (1984), the Children's Defense Fund (1985), the National School Public Relations Association (1985), and Education Commission of the States ("Florida leads . . .," 1984). After a discussion of the status, origin, and drawbacks of different kinds of reforms, we will focus on the effects of the different reforms on the different types of students discussed in Part One.

Excellence Reforms

The reforms listed in Table 8 are derived from what is called the excellence movement. Many were originally recommended in *A Nation at Risk*, which was released in the spring of 1983 as the report of the National Commission on Excellence in Education.

As the reader can see, four states, led by Florida (with at least 16 reforms), have approved several initiatives in both the first set of reforms, which mainly affect students, and the second set, which mainly affect teachers and administrators. These four states (Florida, California, New York, and Texas) stress to some degree both the instilling of more academic rigor for students and the upgrading of the teaching force through a variety of means. Illinois lags considerably behind the other states with only six reported initiatives out of a possible 16 actions on these lists, although a number of initiatives have been under consideration by the state.

Among the reforms affecting mainly students, the ones most frequently adopted by the states are increasing graduation requirements (5 states), student evaluation and testing (5), curriculum/textbook changes (5), adding instructional time (3), raising college admission standards (3), statewide assessment (3), and requiring exit tests (3). Florida adopted the most reforms (9) oriented to students, followed in order by Texas (8), California (6), New York (4), and Illinois (3).

Among the reforms affecting mainly teachers, the ones most frequently adopted by the states are merit pay/career ladders (5), revising teacher certification (4), requiring competency tests (5), salary increases (4), and professional development for both teachers and administrators (4). California, Florida, and New York adopted the most reforms (7) oriented to teachers, followed in order by Texas (6), and Illinois (3).

Table 8. State Education Reforms in Five States

MEASURE	CA	FL	IL	NY	TX	(Y)
Increase Graduation Requirements	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	5
Student Evaluation/Testing	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	5
Curriculum/Textbook Changes	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	5
Add Instructional Time	Y	Y	NR	NR	Y	3
Statewide Assessment	Y	Y	UC	NR	Y	3
Require Exit Test	NR	Y	NR	Y	Y	3
Raise College Admission Standards	Y	Y	NR	NR	Y	3
Limit Extracurriculars/Athletics	NR	Y	NR	NR	Y	2
Promotional Gates Tests	NR	Y	UC	NR	NR	1
Total Y Response	6	9	3	4	8	
Total UC Response	0	0	2	0	0	
Total NR Response	4	0	4	5	1	
Merit Pay/Career Ladders	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	5
Revise Teacher Certification	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	5
Require Competency Tests	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	5
Salary Increases	Y	Y	UC	Y	Y	4
Professional Development/Teachers	Y	Y	UC	Y	Y	4
P. D./Administrators	Y	Y	UC	Y	Y	4
Aid Prospective Teachers	Y	Y	UC	Y	NR	
Total Y Response	7	7	3	7	6	
Total UC Response	0	0	4	0	0	
Total NR Response	0	0	0	0	1	

KEY
Y = Yes
NR = None Reported
UC = Under Consideration

The original suggestions for these reforms were influenced not by research on exemplary practices or schools but by the concerns of the excellence movement over low standards, diluted curricula, and diffused purposes in our nation's schools. These concerns were expressed by corporate leaders, politicians, and others from outside the education establishment. The overwhelming concern, indeed fear, of these leaders in the early 1980s was that the United States was becoming second-rate in economic competition with Japan. Thus, education was seen as an investment in increasing economic productivity. The call then was for quick and dramatic action in reforming the central core of education with little regard for existing research, for the reforms already in place, for how these new initiatives would be funded, implemented, and assessed, or

even for what the education establishment thought of the proposed reforms.

Most of the education establishment have come to see the reforms as a mixed blessing. The reforms have brought new expectations, energy, and resources to education, but also top-down mandates that still need to be transformed into concrete practice and owned by front-line teachers, their supervisors, and, of course, the students.

Effective Schools Reforms

Some will say that Hispanic and black achievement cannot be dramatically improved because these groups suffer high levels of poverty. The notion that family and community background are more important than schools in accounting for student performance was supported by the findings of several large studies from the late sixties and early seventies. But these findings are now strongly challenged by more recent research, especially the research reported in the effective schools literature.

According to the late Ronald Edmonds (1948, p.37), who was a leading researcher and proponent of effective schools, researchers such as Brookover, Lezotte, and himself confirm "family background as a powerful correlate of pupil performance but have rejected family background as the cause of the correlation. Instead, they have concluded that *school response to family background* is the cause of depressed achievement for low-income and minority students." (Italics are Edmonds'.) An effective school, then, is one in which the children of the poor can be as well prepared in school skills as the children of the middle class. The National Commission on Secondary Schooling of Hispanics documented that there are such secondary schools for Hispanics. And if the reader learns only one thing from this monograph, it should be the realization that schools can and are making a difference in keeping and educating Hispanics through high school. This is important to realize because we need all the hope and positive examples we can obtain if we are to truly confront and change the generally miserable condition of secondary schooling for Hispanics.

The effective schools movement has been attracting wide interest from a variety of groups, including legislators. Research during the last several years documents the important characteristics of these successful schools that distinguish them from other schools. Five characteristics are generally noted: strong leadership at the school level, high expectations that no child will fall below minimum levels of achievement, an orderly school atmosphere conducive to learning and teaching, student acquisition of basic and higher order skills taking precedence over all other school activities, and frequent and consistent evaluation of student progress (Hawkins, 1984).

As the movement grows it encompasses more recent findings from

effective school research and elements of other reforms such as school site planning, and is now developing a strong ideological cast — that is, a body of concepts with strong visionary aspects. It is a way of thinking about and organizing schools. The movement fosters a "can-do" attitude on the part of local school and community folks. In fact, effective schools, as mentioned before, are typically created by administrators or other local forces at the school site, and it may be that consideration of this characteristic has helped to temper some of the initial, heavy-handed mandates from the states.

The emergence of the effective schools movement is extremely important for the education of the poor and minorities. It would be wrong to say, however, that what should be done to improve secondary schooling for Hispanics and other students from the perspective of effective schools research has been identified and is now being widely implemented. Undoubtedly, the movement's success is encouraging educators on the secondary level to explore and adopt the principles of the effective schools movement. But unlike the situation at the elementary level, researchers and educators are still in the process of identifying the general characteristics of effective secondary schools. Some researchers (Firestone and Herriott, 1983) have cautioned that what is known about effective elementary schools may not be directly applicable to secondary schools. Others have been critical of researchers of effective schools for not addressing certain non-cognitive characteristics such as "caring" found in other good schools.

Other Education Initiatives

According to the *Education Week* survey of state officials ("Excellence," 1985), there is a growing concern in Florida about " 'the other side of excellence' — the dropouts, remedial education, the role of vocational education — when stressing excellence in academic areas." A major criticism leveled at the initiatives pursued or supported by the excellence movement is that they are being fashioned as if the nation's student population were homogeneous or all white and middle class. Initiatives to meet the needs of at-risk students and students from populations previously excluded from the education mainstream have not been enacted as often as the excellence-type reforms.

Table 9 lists initiatives and reforms recommended to suit the needs of at-risk students. Many are based on effective schools research and correspond also to the recommendations made by the National Commission on Secondary Schooling for Hispanics in *Make Something Happen*.

All but two of the listed items should be self-explanatory. According to the Children's Defense Fund survey, Innovative Programs/Incentives are to support school improvement projects and other improvement schemes. Planning/Accountability Requirements are for developing long-

Table 9. Other Education Initiatives

MEASURE	CA	FL	IL	NY	TX	Y
Improve Attendance	Y	Y	Y	Y	NR	4
Dropout Prevention	Y	Y	Y	Y	NR	4
Fiscal Equity Initiatives	NR	Y	UC	Y	Y	3
Remediation/Compensatory Education	NR	Y	NR	Y	Y	3
Innovative Programs/Incentives	Y	Y	UC	Y	NR	3
Planning/Account Requirements	Y	Y	NR	NR	NR	2
School Discipline/Climate	Y	NR	UC	Y	NR	2
Vocational Education/Job Training	NR	Y	UC	Y	NR	2
Parent/Community Involvement	NR	NR	NR	Y	NR	1
Smaller Classes	NR	NR	NR	Y	NR	1
Pre-School Initiatives	NR	NR	Y	Y	NR	2
Mandatory Kindergarten	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	0
Total Y Response	5	6	3	10	2	
Total UC Response	0	0	4	0	0	
Total NR Response	7	5	5	2	10	

KEY
Y = Yes
NR = None Reported
UC = Under Consideration

or short-term school/district improvement plans and/or accountability measures. The leader in pursuing the reforms listed here is New York State with 10, followed by Florida (6); and well behind are California (5), Illinois (3) and Texas (2). Among these reforms, improving attendance and dropout prevention initiatives were adopted by four states.

Toward an Assessment of the Reforms

In comparing the actions of the five states listed in Tables 8 and 9, it is clear that Texas has adopted considerably fewer of the "Other" reforms while Florida and California have adopted some. New York has adopted the greatest number from both lists. While Illinois has been considering a number of reforms, a cursory look at its accomplishments in education would lead one to think that the reform fever had bypassed the state. Overall, the most common policy thrust across the states is to raise standards for both teachers and students — in short, the adoption of the excellence reforms. What we cannot determine from these data is the extent that Other-type initiatives are already in place because of their adoption by local schools and communities.

Three of the states are providing their new funds on either an equitable or a weighted basis, giving preference to populations with special needs.

Yet, much of the legislation is still global, and does not really grapple with the especially poor quality education that minority and low-income students so often receive. Typically, the legislation is more prescriptive in setting state-wide standards and requirements from the top down than developmental in fostering fundamental change at the school and district levels.

To be sure, it is not easy to initiate and sustain such change at the school building level. Certainly, this sort of change cannot be legislated from afar in the state capital. But states can provide resources, technical assistance, and other support to foster change. We also know more now about how fundamental change occurs at a local school because of the documented experiences of the effective school movement. As indicated by the reforms listed in Table 9, some states have adopted legislation to foster effective school principles in their states.

Notable among the Planning/Accountability Requirements that fosters local school improvement is a California initiative that has been called the nation's first "accountability program." Under this plan, districts will be reviewed on a school-by-school basis on their progress toward 5-year goals on five quality indicators of student performance: course enrollments; scores on state tests and S.A.T. and advanced placement tests; dropout and attendance rates; participation in extracurricular activities; and the amount of homework and writing assignments that students complete. Not only does this particular reform foster local school planning but also it holds schools accountable on a range of indicators of student performance beyond just test scores.

Implications of Reforms for Hispanic Students

How will the various reforms affect different types of Hispanic students? While it is still too early to evaluate the systematic effect of these reforms in general or their effects on various types of students, we will try to foretell some of the effects in the next subsections.

Above-Average and Average Students. America's above-average students are some of the best in the world, but no doubt they can use more academic stimulation, especially in the form of better prepared teachers. Regrettably, only about 10 to 15 percent of the Hispanics in the 1982 class, depending on the criterion used, could be considered above average. It is frequently claimed that the object of many excellence reforms is the average middle-class student who needs to be challenged out of a state of mediocrity. Undoubtedly, these students need to be challenged and most will respond to challenge. And as for the Hispanics who fall into this category, most will respond likewise. But average students are not, unfortunately, the bulk of the Hispanic student population.

At-Risk Students. The concern expressed most often by advocates for at-risk students is that the excellence-type reforms, especially higher

standards, are going to push these students out of school and accelerate the dropout rates that are already high. In fact, most Hispanics are not doing academically well and are not taking a sufficient number of academic courses. How will the excellence reforms affect these students? What is often overlooked by observers of the excellence movement is that the group that will probably be most affected by these reforms will not be the college bound or those already achieving well but the large mass of students who remain in school while not achieving well. These students do not automatically see themselves as preparing for college work or even the world of work after high school. Most Hispanics fall into this category and, therefore, will probably be most affected by the reforms.

It is the schooling of these students that will have to incur the most extensive change for the excellence movement to succeed. Likewise, it is this group of students that will most need to change their attitudes toward school and their school work habits in order for the reforms of the excellence movement to succeed. Most Hispanics will need to take more academic work to meet the new higher standards for graduation, but they will also require better teaching from well-qualified teachers. The emphasis on improving and better compensating the teaching force in these states will lead to better instruction in time. Yet, the relative lack of additional resources, even those for remediation, and of provisions for improvement programs at the school site in these reforms makes one seriously question their ultimate success for the bulk of the non-college bound and, even more so, for at-risk students. We will return to these concerns in Part Three.

In assessing the effect of the reforms on all students, especially at-risk students, researchers at Johns Hopkins University (McDill et al., 1985) suggest the use of a "full enrollment model" by school administrators. This model would require including actual or estimated scores for students who have already dropped out. School authorities could actually test a sample of dropouts from their schools as researchers for the High School and Beyond survey did in 1982 or estimate scores from earlier scores and background characteristics. These scores could then be appropriately combined with the scores of the in-school students for a clearer picture of the effect of the reforms in terms of both excellence and equity.

PART THREE:
INADEQUACY OF CURRENT REFORMS

As we have seen, many of the current state initiatives were provoked not by research on exemplary schools but by the concerns of the excellence movement over low standards, diluted curricula, and diffused purposes in our nation's schools. Many of these concerns were expressed by corporate leaders, politicians, and others from outside the education establishment. How do we mesh, if we can, these concerns, which have been transformed into top-down mandates, with the basic school-site orientation of the effective school movement and other reforms, and with the needs and characteristics of Hispanic youth?

We have seen that a large portion, perhaps 45 percent, of the Hispanics who remain in school can be considered at-risk or in danger of dropping out because of their below-average grades, poor achievement scores, and so on. Not only can we say that many Hispanics have been floundering adrift through school with their potential neglected, but we can also foresee further difficulties for this type of student if other reforms, supported by the appropriate resources, are not implemented. Finally, how do we make sense of the excellence reforms that are now being implemented in regard to stemming the hemorrhaging of Hispanics from school systems throughout the country?

Answers to policy questions like these are never easy, but policy analysts and researchers must provide some options for the consideration of policymakers, especially now that some of them are becoming alarmed about the prospects of the overall dropout situation. This part of the paper is divided into four sections in an attempt to make some concrete suggestions for changes beyond the ones that already have been implied. The first section deals with two subjects that have been overlooked by the reform movements but are particularly important for Hispanics — counseling, and the connection between school and work. The second section focuses on more difficult, comprehensive issues that would be entailed in reorganizing schools to meet the needs of the diversity of students in a new era of schooling. The third section is a short review of specific strategies and alternative programs for retaining potential dropouts and for attracting older dropouts back to an educational setting. Finally, the last section is devoted to other developments outside the current purview of high school reform but which we need to consider as these developments are now affecting Hispanic children who will be entering secondary schools during the next 15 years.

Overlooked Subjects for Reform That Are Important to Hispanics

Counseling. The lack of attention to the counseling function in secondary schools is apparent in the current reforms. Because only 46 percent

of Hispanic adults (25 years or older) are high school graduates compared to 72 percent of non-Hispanics (Bureau of the Census, 1985), Hispanic students are less likely to rely on their parents for certain kinds of advice. They are in much greater need of academic counseling and career guidance, starting in middle schools, if they are to meet new demands for academic performance. For example, 13 percent of Hispanic sophomores chose a program on the basis of their parents' advice compared to 20 percent of the HSB national sample, while 29 percent of the Hispanic HSB dropouts chose their high school program on their own.

Yet, the student-to-counselor ratios continue to rise. While the recommended ratio is 250:1, cities such as Chicago have a ratio of over 450:1 (Illinois State Task Force on Hispanic Student Dropouts, 1985, p.3). The National Commission on Secondary Schooling for Hispanics heard of 700:1 ratios in some schools. Some schools with large Hispanic student populations also did not have counselors on staff who spoke Spanish and had some understanding of Hispanic cultures. Such counselors are valuable for their ability to communicate in Spanish with the student's parents. As has been shown repeatedly in alternative school settings (Foley, 1985), good and sensitive counseling can make an enormous difference in reorienting and motivating many students.

Unfortunately, the history of counseling and Hispanic high school students is not a happy one for the most part. The story is often heard in the community of the bum steer a counselor gave a Hispanic student in regard to career plans. As mentioned before, 29 percent of the Hispanic HSB dropouts said they decided their high school placement on their own, but interestingly, 38 percent of the dropouts, as compared to 20 percent of the Hispanics who remained in school, chose their programs on the advice of a counselor. We cannot, of course, make any statement of causality between counselor advice and dropping out; however, the connection warrants further study. According to research by Rehberg and Rosenthal (1978, p. 144), counselors are influenced to encourage a student to seek entry to college or employment in the labor market more by the student's "scholastic ability, educational ambition, and presumed degree of parental educational interest than they are by the occupational and educational attainments of the student's parents. Furthermore, the student's curriculum location as a sophomore, that institutional arrangement by which the student becomes committed either to a demanding course of study in preparation for college or to a less intellectually rigorous program of study in anticipation of employment, also has an impact on the counselor that is larger than the impact of social class." Irony abounds in this finding. Does it mean that the typical counselor, because of training, inclination, or lack of time, works with a student and parents only to *realize* their ambitions but not to *inspire* and help *shape* their ambitions?

In today's society, it is hard enough for any adolescent to have an understanding of our highly specialized, often abstract world of work. But surely the middle-class student has an advantage in this regard over the working-class student, and even more so over the student with marginally employed or non-working parents. Counselors and teachers need to work with students to expand their vision of possible options in the adult working world. Without seeing the potential and opportunity of many careers, it is hard to develop realistic educational and occupational ambitions, realistic in the sense of understanding the steps and actions needed to reach a certain ambition.

Many Hispanic students and parents alike often do not understand the implications and consequences of placements for further education and career goals. Research by Rosenbaum (1980) indicates that many students in non-college preparatory tracks hope and plan to attend college. Hamilton (1985, p.17) writes, in commenting on research by Rosenbaum (1976 and 1980), that "U.S. grouping practices . . . are presented as short-term, and the opportunity for all high school graduates to attend college is so strongly emphasized that students and parents can be surprised . . . to discover that they have had their options limited by a succession of group assignments whose implication they did not understand."

The counselor (and the counseling function in general) can and often does play a more important role in diminishing or inspiring educational and occupational ambitions than is realized. Roger Aubrey, a Vanderbilt professor, urges counselors to "develop ways to monitor students' academic, personal, and social progress; become more active consultants to teachers, parents, and administrators; and become more involved in curriculum planning" ("Curriculum," 1985). In any case, the nature and role of counseling on the secondary level and the training of counselors needs to be examined in the context of the current reforms.

Work While Attending School. The connection, or lack of it, between attending school and working is another area that should be closely examined in the context of high school reform because of the prominence of work in the lives of many Hispanic students. Although some controversy exists as to the extent of work among students, we now have a better picture of the extent among Hispanics than previously. We also know more about the meaning of work for Hispanic students and families. However, we are not so clear about how work can affect or distract from school performance, how work could be better integrated into the curriculum, and how work and school could be better coordinated in the lives of the students. Some research exists to answer these concerns, although much of it is contradictory and not necessarily applicable to Hispanics. The intent here is not to resolve contradictions in the research or even to propose practical solutions, but to increase awareness of the

issue among policymakers and school administrators, and to encourage them to investigate the matter in their own situations and to explore their own solutions.

The issue of work among Hispanic males has been obscured by other policy concerns and technical matters, including the major problem of the faltering school-to-work transition for this country's youth — the black and white differentials in youth unemployment, the lack of data on Hispanic employment until recently, and the lack of disaggregation of Hispanic data by gender.

In a major analysis of the first wave of the High School and Beyond data in regard to youth employment during high school, Noah Lewin-Epstein (1981) found that Hispanic senior males during the spring of 1980:

- had higher labor force participation rates than any other group of students (over three-quarters were either working or seeking work during the week prior to the survey);
- averaged more hours (22.2) of work per week than any other group (just over 50 percent worked 20 or more hours a week);
- held full time jobs (16.6 percent) more than any other group; and
- together as a group with Hispanic females, were employed more (59.8 percent) than blacks (48.7 percent) and less than whites (65.2 percent).

Hispanic sophomore females were least likely of all groups to be in the labor force. Of the seniors, except for black females, Hispanic females were least likely to be in the labor force. This is not to say that Hispanic females do not work; the substantial role of the adolescent female in the domestic work of the Hispanic family is well-known.

Depending on the data base used, some differences exist as to the actual number of hours that students work as well as the actual percentage who work. Most of the differences in reported amounts can be traced to differences in how data are collected in different surveys. To illustrate, the Bureau of the Census' Current Population Survey (CPS) collects data on youth employment on the basis of what the head of household reports, while surveys such as High School and Beyond and the Labor Department's National Longitudinal Survey rely on responses from the youths themselves. While CPS figures for youth employment indicators tend to be lower than other surveys, the relationships between whites, blacks, and Hispanics and by gender tend to remain the same.

Lewin-Epstein (1981, p. 70) develops three sets of estimates for assessing the possible importance of adolescent earnings in total family income. By applying estimates of weeks employed reported in the Department of Labor's study of youth labor force behavior for youth enrolled in school in 1978, by sex and ethnic group, to the family income and hourly earnings of the HSB seniors, he estimates that during a year Hispanic urban

females would earn 5.7 percent of family income, compared to 4.4 percent for white suburban females, and that Hispanic urban males would earn 9.3 percent of family income, compared to 6.3 percent for white suburban males. For both sexes Hispanics would earn less during a year's time but their earnings would represent a larger portion of the family income. If the estimates are based on 50 weeks of employment a year, Hispanic urban females would earn 18 percent of the family income while white suburban females would earn 9.4 percent, Hispanic urban males would earn 22.4 percent while white suburban males would earn 11.8 percent. While employment during school has implications for the student's future integration into the adult world, as Lewin-Epstein indicates, it also has immediate economic benefits.

Even if students use all their earnings for personal consumption and do not turn over any of it to the parents, these students would be less of a burden to their parents and the family as a whole would benefit. (Some research does actually indicate that many adolescent workers spend their earnings for consumption of drugs and other hedonistic pursuits. High School and Beyond data show, however, that Hispanics consumed less hashish/marijuana and cigarettes and slightly less alcohol than the national norms.) However, in fact, 57 percent of all 1980 Hispanic sophomores, as compared to 37 percent for the national sample, gave some percentage of their earnings in 1982 to their families to help support the household. Twenty percent of the same Hispanics, as compared to 9 percent for the national sample, gave half or more of their earnings to their families.

If Hispanic student earnings play a larger role in family upkeep than the overall sample average, does a link exist between Hispanic dropping out and family economic need? Apparently so for some, because if one separates out the Hispanic dropouts from the figures given above, 70 percent of the dropouts gave some percentage of earnings to the family upkeep and 28 percent gave half or more. Furthermore, 65 percent of the 1980 Hispanic sophomores who were not attending school by the time of the 1982 follow-up worked 15 or more hours a week just prior to the base year survey in 1980, while only 51 percent of those who later remained in school worked as much. Also, a greater number of the prospective dropouts in 1980 earned more per hour than those who stayed in school.

To put the relation between working and dropping out of school in slightly different terms, Barro (1984) found that number of hours worked is correlated with dropping out for both males and females. For up to 14 hours of paid employment a week, there is little effect. The dropout rate increases by 50 percent for those who work 15 to 21 hours a week, and doubles for students who work 22 or more hours.

Unfortunately for the dropouts, they began to lose ground soon after

dropping out, and by the time of the 1982 follow-up only 45 percent were working for pay, while 46 percent of those who remained in school did so. Undoubtedly, the 1982 recession and the dramatic decline in federal youth employment programs account for much of the loss of jobs for both groups. But other factors help explain the decline in employment for the dropouts, including the web of adult responsibilities that closed in on some of them, especially females. Fully a third of the female dropouts left school because they had married or had plans to do so, and 25 percent left school because they were pregnant, although we do not know how many of these same females are also counted in the married category. In any case, by the time of the 1982 follow-up, 34 percent of the female dropouts were married and 35 percent had their own children. We can assume that most of these were not employed since 18 percent of the total Hispanic dropouts said they were homemakers at the time of the follow-up, and it is likely that nearly all of these homemakers were females, thus representing nearly 35 percent of the female cohort.

How do young Hispanics view their work for pay? Table 10 indicates that they have strong, positive attitudes toward their jobs whether or not they are in school. These rates are not particularly extraordinary or different from national norms but they illustrate the strong attraction work has for youth.

The only sizable difference between in-school and out-of-school Hispanics is that 29 percent of the latter agreed that their job was more important than school, compared to 17 percent of the former. What is extraordinary about these figures is that while the attraction to work is acknowledged by both groups, the legitimacy of the importance of school is also acknowledged by more than two-thirds of the dropouts. In fact, only 24 percent of these dropouts thought their leaving high school was a good decision (not shown in table).

We have discussed the function, the importance, and the extent of paid work while attending school, especially for the Hispanic male, as well as the attraction to work for the dropout. What do school administrators, teachers, and counselors think about students working? Unfortunately, such information is not available to us in the High School and Beyond data. However, we can gather some idea from other sources. In a study on Hispanics in fast food jobs, Charner and Shore Fraser (1984, p.85) found that 25 percent of the Hispanic employees made special scheduling arrangements with their schools in order to work in their jobs, 13 percent received school credit for working on their jobs, and 16 percent reported that their supervisors provided their schools with reports on how well they did their jobs. If we can assume that these figures are not likely to be exceeded by any other industry, we could probably find some link between work and schooling for no more than 20 to 25 percent of student workers. As to whether teachers are aware of the extent

Table 10. Attitudes of Hispanic 1980 Sophomores Toward Job in 1982, by School Status

ATTITUDE	IN-SCHOOL	OUT-OF-SCHOOL
Student Enjoys Working for Pay	91%	93%
Agreed That Job Encourages Good Work Habits	79%	84%
Agreed That Job is More Enjoyable Than School	48%	52%
Agreed That Job is More Important Than School	17%	29%

Source: Unpublished tabulation from High School and Beyond Survey. National Center for Education Statistics.

to which their students are working, we can surmise that they probably are not because only about one-tenth of the Hispanic HSB sample (and the national sample as well) thought their teachers were interested in their lives outside of class.

Why is work not better integrated into the curriculum and school? Many Hispanic students, especially senior males, have been leading double lives as workers and students. Why should this be? If school and work were better integrated, the student's school work and paid work would mutually benefit each other, and dropout rates could probably be lowered. Charner and Shore Fraser (1984, p.93) make recommendations about how better links can be made between students' fast food jobs and their schooling. We can adapt some of these recommendations for our general purposes:

- Schools should be attempting to integrate and reinforce job-related and general employability skills on the job through the curriculum and counseling. Many of the skills that fast food employees gain from the job (e.g. teamwork, dealing with people, awareness of how a business runs) could be incorporated into existing career education programs, using the actual work experience rather than hypothetical work situations as a basis for educational exploration.
- Programs could be developed which provide the student/employee with progressively more responsible work at a job site, such as a restaurant, supported by coordinated coursework and store training, with promotion into a management slot upon graduation from high school.
- School counselors or placement persons should establish contact with nearby companies and store managers who serve the commu-

nity. For example, fast food stores are almost always recruiting hourly employees and would likely welcome referrals from a reliable source. Establishment of such relationships would give the counselor the opportunity to determine first-hand what the quality of work experience in a particular company is likely to be and whether the needs of Hispanic students will be met and well-served by the work experience.

While the discussion so far in Part Three has been about some specific aspects of schooling and students' work lives, they are harbingers of a more encompassing issue: the discontinuity of high school for Hispanics from a blue-collar, working class world. Because of the way most public high schools are organized in this country, only students who are bound for college immediately after graduation are considered "winners" and all other students are "losers" in one way or another. Why is it that teaching and counseling the college-bound have such a high status? Why is it that many teachers of students in the non-academic tracks feel they occupy a lower status in the pecking order of the teachers' ranks? Why is that the students in the non-academic tracks feel that their teachers don't respect them or expect much from them in either intellectual or moral terms?

Even more spectacularly awry are the opportunities we as a society give those who go on to college and those who go to work. College students are usually considered and treated as dependents until they are 21 years of age. Benefits such as lower insurance and tax rates for the parents are the result. Loans and grants for tuition and living expenses are subsidized by public funds. Public and private institutions of higher learning are also subsidized by public funds and by private contributions which are deducted from taxes and, therefore, the public treasury. The average cost that states paid for public higher education during the 1984-85 school year was $4,522.00 per college student ("Alaska Pays," 1985). What opportunities do the non-college-bound, the "losers," receive after high school graduation? Very few. Could this lack of opportunity for the "losers" be part of the explanation for poor academic achievement and dropping out in the last two years of high school?

Major Changes in the Organization of Secondary Schools

The greatest drawback to the current reform movement may well be its failure to incorporate into secondary school initiatives an understanding of adolescent human development and student cultures, especially those from a blue-collar working class background. The problem could be approached from a number of angles, including the clash of adolescent peer groups with the mostly bureaucratic and impersonal school culture of large high schools; the earlier psycho-sexual development of today's adolescents, especially females; the longer drawn-out period of

adolescent dependence on others; the need for better confluence between working class ethics and school values; and the resentment of a "Mickey Mouse" atmosphere for students who already may be taking on a number of adult responsibilities on behalf of their families.

While these concerns affect all Hispanics to some extent, we will continue to explore here how high schools are organized to diminish opportunities for non-college-bound Hispanics. More than whites or blacks, a larger percentage of Hispanics come from blue collar and service family backgrounds. And from what we have found, many will remain in these socioeconomic circumstances doing just barely better than their parents.

The High School Mission and American Ideology

The concept of today's comprehensive high school was considered a progressive social innovation when it was widely adopted after World War I, because it allowed students with different backgrounds and different goals, such as preparing for college or a specific vocation, to pursue their interests under the same roof. It was also a response to the criticism that the pre-World War I high school was causing a very high dropout rate because its curriculum did not meet the needs and interests of many students. It was seen as providing for two components of a democratic and rapidly industrializing society: unification and specialization. According to Oakes (1985, p. 33), "specialization was interpreted by the public schools to mean the provision of an education that would best meet individuals' future needs and thus train them to play their specialized roles in industrial America. While specialization would be achieved by the differentiated curricula, unification for the attainment of common goals — Americanizing, if you will — would be achieved through the *experience* of attending common schools." In short, these components together translated into a process of sorting students into college preparation for the middle class and vocational education for the lower-class, immigrant youth of those times.

During the 1930s and again after World War II, the concern of leading educators centered on "those youth whom the high school wasn't reaching —those who dropped out of school, usually because its programs didn't meet their needs and interests" (Cohen, 1974, p. xxvi). In short time, these concerns were transformed into the third major program offering of the contemporary, comprehensive high school: general education. In an important meeting at the U. S. Office of Education in 1945, it was stated that high schools were not meeting the needs of the great majority of youth. High schools were preparing 20 percent of youth for college, 20 percent for "desirable skilled occupations." The needs of the other 60 percent were not being met.

In effect, the leading reformers of the time considered the majority of the nation's high school youth not capable of undergoing either seri-

ous academic training or vocational education for skilled occupations. They proposed a general education of "life-adjustment" education, which would help solve the "real life problems of ordinary youth" such as how to get married, how to furnish a home and budget its upkeep, how to drive a car, how to dress and get along with people. Cohen (p. xxvii) quotes the Harvard Committee's *General Education in a Free Society* (1945): "The unsolved problem . . . is to reach students who do not read well yet, are not skilled in hand, whose backgrounds are bad, who in cities especially are prey to a thousand mercenary interests — the kind of young people who . . . in other times would have left school early and found self-respect in work but who now, if they leave school, are simply unemployed."

Two times in this century high schools added curricula, vocational and general education, as a way to retain students in school and reduce the dropout rate. Vocational education was also a response to the need of industry for a skilled "industrial army." While the concept of general education was enormously popular in the late 1940s, 1950s, and early 1960s, and the percentage of students in the general track increased from 12 percent to roughly 43 percent (West et al., 1985), the overall goals still remain ambiguous. Moreover, general education produces the largest percentage of dropouts, although this is not meant to imply causality. General education may simply attract more of those who would have dropped out in any case. Vocational education produces the second largest percentage of dropouts although it is generally credited with being able to retain some students who would otherwise drop out.

Curiously, the current reform movement has not paid much attention to vocational education and even less to general education. But we know that both programs are losing enrollments because of the increased academic requirements students have to fulfill. Will our growing interest in reducing the dropout rate revive an interest in these programs or shall we start a new high school program, called alternative education, which would include some vocational and general education but be guided by the current principles of alternative education? We will return to aspects of this question in the next section.

We can conclude from this brief review of these major efforts to increase the retention of students in school that the American public high school has acted not only as a "sorter" and trainer of youths for differentiated futures in the labor market but has also undergone two major changes in an attempt to accommodate and retain the potential dropout. The crux of the problem before us is whether these two traditional functions —sorting and retaining students — are really incompatible in the same institution.

The high school institution that we have now produces winners at the expense of having "losers." It is an expensive system in both psychic

and economic terms, because the losers end up feeling like failures, unworthy and useless, and then lack the motivation to participate in the mainstream of American life. What is the purpose of this arrangement? Do we really need the threat of failure in order to motivate people to succeed in our economic system?

Numerous researchers (Good & Marshall, 1984; Oakes, 1985; Rosenbaum, 1980) conclude that the costs of ability grouping or tracking to low-achieving groups of students in terms of receiving an inferior education and generating negative feelings toward self are not worth the uncertain benefits to the rest of the students and school. No less damaging to the cause for differentiated secondary schooling is the finding by Oakes (1985) and others that the assignment of students to different tracks is usually not made on objective grounds.

For what futures do non-academic programs prepare students? First, general education was never intended, as was noted before, as a curriculum to prepare students for any broad occupational pattern. Furthermore, the original goals for general education remain as ambiguous as ever. As for the other major program, Hamilton (1984, p.19) concludes, based on numerous studies and reviews of research, that most vocational education graduates, except those from secretarial and clerical programs, "have little if any advantage in the labor market when compared with graduates of the general or academic tracks." Less than one-third of vocational graduates ever work in the occupation for which they were trained (Conroy, 1979).

In reality it is a vicious circle, because most vocational teachers and counselors can respond that employers in the primary labor market do not consider young people seriously as employees until they are in their early to mid-twenties or have married and taken on adult responsibilities. The iron is that Hispanics do assume adult responsibilities sooner than other groups. We have already seen this with a good portion of the dropouts. But it also happens to those who graduate. Within two years of graduating from high school, the following groups married at these approximate rates: blacks, 7.3 percent (about 4.5 percent of the males and 9 percent of the females); whites, 12.4 (about 8 percent of the males and 16 percent of the females); and Hispanics, 16.8 percent (about 11 percent of the males and 22 percent of the females) National Center for Education Statistics, 1984, p. 21).

What are the student outcomes of the typical education Hispanics have received? Table 11 compares the standardized scores of Hispanic ethnics and non-Hispanic whites in 1980 on the High School and Beyond battery of tests for seniors. What these tests assessed can be related to a "continuum ranging from school areas, which may be called " 'subject-matter proficiency,' to the non-school areas, termed 'analytic or fluid ability' " (Page & Keith, 1981, p. 11-13). The vocabulary tests

are considered to assess a mixture of knowledge and ability affected by both school-related and non-school-related factors.

The table shows a disturbing mismatch between the potential and actual performance of these representative Hispanic seniors. The scores on the school-related tests fall well below the national norms, but on the measures that test "analytic ability," the Hispanic scores are closer to national norms. It is important to remember that these Hispanics represent the survivors of their cohort in school. About half of the Puerto Ricans and Mexican Americans, for example, would have dropped out of school by the time these students were tested. Had they been included, the school-related scores would probably have been even lower, although it is not clear what the change in the ability scores would be. At any rate, it is apparent that Hispanics are not reaching the achievement levels of which they are capable.

New York City is reported to have one of the country's highest overall dropout rate, at well over 60 percent, and the highest rate for Hispanics of any major city at 80 percent (Maeroff, 1983). It also has a selective high school admissions process. The Educational Priorities Panel, a coalition of 24 civic and parents' groups, has charged that the public schools admissions process weeds out the lowest-achieving youngsters and dumps them in the least desirable schools. The Panel found that about "90 percent of the city's middle school students apply to one of the city's magnet high schools out of a desire to avoid attending neighborhood schools, which are perceived to be of lower quality." The average student applied to four such schools. But, according to coverage by *Education Week* ("Civic Groups," 1985) of the Panel's finding, 70 percent of the students were denied all of their magnet school choices and ended up in their neighborhood schools. A Panel spokesperson is quoted as saying, "a disappointed child soon becomes a disaffected one."

Ruth Horowitz (1983) conducted an ethnographic study of culture and identity in a Mexican American community in Chicago during parts of the 1970s. She found that the Chicanos who went to local Catholic high schools or to the public commercial and vocational schools outside their neighborhood were more likely to do better in school and to actually graduate than their friends who went to the neighborhood high school. Unlike the local school, these other schools were seen as legitimate and more rational (because one could learn to read or learn a skill) even though they were strict and even oppressive in their rules. The Catholic schools did not have differentiated ability tracks, and students with varying academic abilities interacted with one another. Friendships were made within the schools and several possibilities existed, beyond academic work, of gaining and confirming self worth within the school context. Feelings of group solidarity and concern were strong in these schools.

Horowitz concludes that poor achievement in the local public school

Table 11. Standardized Scores[1] on Assessment Areas: Hispanic Ethnic and White 1980 Seniors, Spring 1980

HIGH SCHOOL AND BEYOND TESTS	WHITE	PUERTO RICAN	MEXICAN AMERICAN	CUBAN	OTHER HISPANIC
NON-SCHOOL RELATED					
Mosaic 1	51	50	48	50	48
Mosaic 2	51	49	48	49	46
Picture-Numeric	51	49	NA	NA	NA
3 Dimensional Visualization	51	47	47	49	46
MIXED					
Vocabulary 2	51	46	45	48	45
Vocabulary 1	51	44	44	49	45
SCHOOL RELATED					
Mathematics 2	51	46	46	48	46
Mathematics 1	52	44	44	48	44
Reading	52	44	44	46	43

[1]Scores have been standardized to a mean of 50 and a standard deviation of 10.

Source: Sandoval, C. K. 1983, p. 8; tabulation from High School and Beyond Survey.

was related to the organization of and the interaction within the school, but that student expectations about the school also perpetuated the failure to achieve and increased the physical dangers to both students and school personnel. She continues (p.158): "The youths, like their peers, are aware of the need for education in order to get ahead in the urban industrial society. Yet most fail within the local school system. Part of the problem lies in the students' perception that the local school system does not have legitimate authority. Students perceive the schools as lacking rationality (they serve neither to certify nor to enlighten) and reasonableness (both the organization and staff-pupil relationships question student intelligence and moral character). The school is saying they are losers in many spheres: intellectual, economic, and moral. Students do not experience this as isolated individuals; they talk about their experiences, both successes and failures. The school authority's lack of legitimacy becomes collectively understood and affects even those who may not be entirely convinced."

Local neighborhood high schools need not be like the one Horowitz describes or like those that students and parents in New York City are apparently trying to avoid. But it is clear that strong actions are required to transform the relationships and expectations of both students and teachers within the school as well as the school's reputation within the

neighborhood before it can regain its legitimacy and authority. The National Commission on Secondary Schooling for Hispanics and several other groups have found such "legitimate" local schools with predominantly Hispanic student bodies in cities throughout the country, including New York City.

Unfortunately, most Hispanics have not been attending such schools, according to the responses to questions about their schools and teachers that were part of the High School and Beyond survey. Hispanics reported on the following disciplinary matters in their schools at the corresponding percentages: students often cut classes, 53 percent; students don't often attend school, 48 percent; students often refuse to obey instructions, 23 percent; students often get in fights with each other, 21 percent; and students often attack or threaten to attack teachers, 5 percent.

Hispanics rated the following characteristics about most of their teachers as positive at the corresponding percentages: enjoy their work, 37 percent; are clear in their presentations, 30 percent; make you work hard so you'll learn, 24 percent; treat everyone with respect, 30 percent; are patient and understanding, 26 percent; and are witty and humorous, 16 percent. As reported before, only about one tenth of either the Hispanic or national sample thought their teachers were interested in their lives outside of class. Given the nature of most of today's high schools, it is understandable why this figure is so low, but it is a sad commentary indeed on the fragmented and anonymous nature of school life for both students and teachers.

Another Approach to Reform

The excellence reforms are important because we need to raise our expectations about what all students can accomplish in school. Few would disagree with that these days. But many would probably say that not all students can withstand a rigorous upgrading of school work and that we must develop alternatives for them which will not hold back the other students capable of doing more rigorous work. This is the direction many policymakers are beginning to consider. Actually, it would not surprise me if a movement develops that proposes a fourth program addition to the high school curriculum — alternative education for dropout-prone students. It may be that alternative education will be needed as an interim solution. We will discuss it as such in the next section.

For some time we have used the convenient excuse that we cannot instill rigor in our schools because it would push out minorities and the poor. Lately, however, we have had a system without rigor and increasingly without minorities and the poor. To achieve both excellence and equity in education we will have to change how many schools are organized and operated. In other words, the excellence reforms and others

that have been enacted are not enough. As Comer (1985, p. xii) points out, "Despite the fact that a number of programs have demonstrated that attention to the context of education — as well as the content, methods and standards — can improve schools, the national reports on education focused almost exclusively on the latter." This is a fundamental challenge for the reform movement and one that has to be faced before genuine and continuing academic rigor can be instilled. The challenge can only be met at the local level, school by school. This section is a general discussion about what schools can do to retain potential dropouts and to have many at-risk students achieve at the higher levels they are capable of reaching. The intention is not to comprehensively cover all aspects of reform for schools but rather to mention some background conditions and, then, principles that would have to be implemented within the context of the whole school before achievement and retention rates for at-risk students could rise. The principles would be used in the development of school communities that would emphasize (1) caring and concern for every member of the school community (Lightfoot, 1983); (2) heterogeneous groupings (and the elimination of tracking) (Oakes, 1985); (3) mastery learning (Anderson, 1985; Bloom, 1976); and (4) conveying the existence of and providing opportunities for advancement upon high school graduation.

The states should set some universal standards, and allocate resources, including technical assistance and research support, to localities but then should stand back and let local people work out solutions for local situations and problems. Only if a locality fails to carry out its responsibilities should the state move in. The same can be said for the responsibilities of the local school district authorities. They should monitor and reward the progress towards change targets and goals in the plans that individual school communities develop for themselves within the larger framework of district and state goals. They should also provide resources in the form of technical assistance and financial support as well as incentives for doing things better. However, they should intervene in a school's affairs only if the school has failed in its responsibilities.

School principals should have their own support network, including electronic bulletin boards which they can all access from wherever they are for information and mutual support. Principals and school communities need much more autonomy in setting specific goals and developing annual plans and budgets for their schools, which should be subject to ratification by the faculty and the student body prior to implementation. Teachers, as both faculty and individuals, also need more latitude in how they accomplish their mission.

Finally, schools should adopt instructional styles that allow students to be active learners through participation, deliberation, and reflection. Likewise, students of high school age should have much more responsi-

bility in self-government, including the setting and monitoring of student behavior and deportment, and in helping each other in a variety of ways, including help in school work. What often is not understood about student cultures or similar situations is that in the absence of a formal framework (legitimate in the eyes of both school employees and students) with positive incentives for student leaders and groups, an informal system of competing leadership and groups evolves that may have negative influences on the life of the school. Student responsibilities have to be meaningful and involve solving real problems and developing real opportunities to improve school life.

The rationale for the above suggestions is to foster productive relationships among students and between students and the school. However, a school with a large student body can be a real barrier to developing strong relationships among students and faculty alike, if nothing is done to organize the school into several mini-schools or "houses" within the same roof. Also, reducing the size of classes helps not only the teacher in managing instruction but also allows for more interaction between students. Hodgkinson (1985) finds that smaller schools and classes correlate better with lower dropout rates than other general school characteristics. Within these mini-organizations, all students get to belong and to participate in a variety of roles that are not only academic.

Other examples illustrate how developing bonds among students gives individuals a sense of belonging and support. A Detroit program ("12 Together") created groups of twelve students with varying abilities who pledge to help each other through all four years of high school. Each group is directed by two counselors, and the group members are responsible for helping those who fall far behind. The program is sponsored by the Metropolitan Detroit Youth Foundation. All students in a Catholic high school in Newark are selected to be members of groups, composed of students with different abilities and interests, which compete with each other in a variety of ways including attendance, community service, academics, and sports. After freshmen are selected for what they can contribute to the group, they remain with the same group and faculty advisor throughout their four years of high school. Such competition and cooperation inspire among group members enthusiasm, devotion, and regard for each other and for the honor of the group. These groupings are intrinsically good, but they also help to counter and overcome the often negative orientation of friendship groups including gangs, developed outside the school in the local neighborhood. It is these local groups that can create havoc in and around a school which some students try to escape by going to schools outside their neighborhood.

Not until a school has an orderly climate and the beginning of a school culture of concern for everyone can the school faculty begin to raise academic standards and expect all students to make greater efforts to learn.

Additionally, it is important that students have opportunities to excel in areas besides academics, for the self worth derived from these experiences often stimulates better school work or at least compensates for low academic abilities.

In any case, all students should achieve mastery of a core curriculum with academic content requirements. The learning tasks need to be defined and structured to make clear what is to be accomplished by the students. If the student requires more time and help in order to master the material, then that assistance can take the form of peer and volunteer tutoring, after-school sessions, intensive summer programs, or another school year if necessary. Taking more time to accomplish the tasks must not be seen as abnormal or as punishment. The essential point is that no student feel inferior because he or she is not exposed to or cannot accomplish what the bulk of the students in a school can accomplish.

The core curriculum should also contain a vocational content requirement. For example, Colorado has initiated an Employability Skills Project aimed at basic entry-level job skills for *every* high school graduate.

Finally, at-risk youth from working-class and poverty backgrounds need active encouragement to stay in school through a variety of incentives and support. To illustrate, volunteers in Atlanta's Adopt-A-Student program work with and encourage juniors and seniors in the lowest quartile of their class to complete school, set career goals, improve academic performance, enhance their job skills, identify job interests, and work out a plan of action for getting a job, postsecondary education, or a military career. The volunteers work with the students, even after graduation, until they reach these goals. Of the students in the program 80 percent have been helped to obtain a job after graduation.

As part of New York City's new dropout prevention program, every freshman this September will receive a certificate of admission to a college of the City University, redeemable upon graduation. In addition, efforts are under way to pledge jobs in the private or public sector to these 9th graders if they complete high school (Hechinger, 1985). The promise of a job upon graduation has been found to be a powerful inducement to stay in or to return to school (Walker, 1984).

At-risk students, then, need smaller, more cohesive school units that integrate social supports and a well-defined academic program. In fact, all students and faculty would benefit in such learning environments. This would of course require basic reforms in the ways most high schools are organized. While these reforms might not be as expensive over time as others, they would require an ongoing effort on the part of all members of a school, as well as support and resources from the district, the state, and the larger community. That such reform will occur on a wide basis is not likely. In the next section, we will consider some other pos-

sible strategies for educating dropout-prone students and dropouts. It may well be that all these strategies are needed, at least on an interim basis.

Other Strategies for Educating Potential Dropouts and Dropouts

Researchers and practitioners (Foley, 1985; Hamilton, 1984; Raywid, 1985) are contributing to a growing body of evidence about how to keep potential dropouts in school. Good dropout prevention programs usually emphasize individualized training in basic skills, alternative school practices, and small classes. Vocational education, coupled with a strong basic skills program, has been found to be effective in retaining potential dropouts in school (Weber & Silvani-Lacey, 1983). Also effective in these programs is the provision of part-time work that is linked to good attendance and/or performance in school.

At least three problems exist in the wide adoption of these types of programs for at-risk students. First, unless priorities are changed, the resources to implement these programs on a wide scale are simply not present. This is especially problematic when one realizes it would require ongoing appropriations over the years and not just one- or two-time infusions of funds as might occur for the institutionalization of the excellence reforms, and even effective-schools-type reforms. Essentially, programs for dropouts and at-risk students are not preventive, but remedial or rehabilitative and, therefore, costly. Yet, they are not as costly to the state as rehabilitative or interventionist programs at later stages of life. Second, while we know how to develop and make these programs work from scratch at individual settings, we have not developed administrative structures to initiate and sustain them at local settings on a wide scale. Third, as Hamilton (1984) points out, are the distinct dangers in identifying and separating potential dropouts from other students and placing them in programs that differ markedly from the ordinary high school experience. The American experience with different educational programs would certainly leave one less than optimistic about further separating low achieving students from other students.

Among the best new strategies for those who have actually dropped out is the "second chance" voucher. Colorado has approved such a program, the first of its kind in the nation, which allows students who have dropped out of school for at least six months to re-enroll at another participating school or school system. While the program is limited to public institutions, it establishes the concept that state funds follow the student and not the school system (Currence, 1985).

Because 40 percent of Hispanic 20- to 24-year-olds are not high school graduates and are not enrolled in school (Bureau of the Census, 1985), a "second chance" voucher system should be considered in states with large numbers of dropouts. The voucher could be used to return to school

or to prepare for G.E.D. examinations and obtain specific job training. For students who need or prefer to work, a "continuating education" program would be suitable. California offers such a program for students over 16 who are working. These students work for their high school diploma on a part-time basis. Lines (1985) reports a lower dropout rate for these students: about half that of nonparticipating high schools in the state.

Hodgkinson (1985) argues that the notion of finishing different levels of education "on time" may be outmoded. He suggests that we begin to encourage dropouts on the secondary level to consider themselves "stopouts" or individuals who have stopped their education temporarily but will be returning to complete it at a future date. The "stopout" phenomenon is already occurring on the postsecondary level.

Other Considerations

Will, in fact, the dropout rates increase if additional academic rigor is instilled? It is widely assumed this will be the case, but it will be more difficult to gauge the actual effects. For example, the Secretary of Education announced in December of 1984 that S.A.T. and A.C.T. examination scores and graduation rates from high school had both improved since 1982 (Bell, 1984). This is correct on a national level but only partly correct for the five states with large Hispanic populations. California, New York, and Texas actually experienced a slight decline of two points on the S.A.T.s in comparing the 1982 and 1984 scores. Florida registered a one point increase on the S.A.T.s and Illinois, one-tenth of a point increase on the much narrower range of scores for the A.C.T.s.[3]

Most states, including the five states with Hispanic concentrations, did improve their graduation rate, but these rates are for 1983, before the excellence reforms were in place. Of the five states, California had the largest increase, from 68.9 percent in 1982 to 75.1 in 1983. But not even the 1985 rates will be a fair test of the excellence reforms in this regard. Not until 1988 or 1989 (about four years after most reforms went into effect) can the graduating class be considered as having experienced the reforms throughout their high school years.

How can the improvement in graduation rates be explained, especially if it continues in the next few years? Awareness of and concern for the dropout problem should have some effect in retaining more youngsters in school. But also, many of the students, especially minorities, now entering high school are actually better prepared than recent high school students.

To illustrate, 9-year-olds in 1980 scored better in all aspects of reading on the National Assessment of Educational Progress tests than the 9-year-olds in 1971. Specifically, Hispanic grade-schoolers improved twice as much as their counterparts across the nation during the late seven-

ties, although Hispanic 9-year-olds in 1980 still read below national levels (National Assessment of Educational Progress, 1982). Several reasons can be given for why we should expect these students to be better prepared for high school.

Jeanne Chall, who has been influential in curriculum planning and research in reading in this country, attributes the improvement in reading to several changes that occurred in the 1970s. Among the changes and innovations were more emphasis on phonics and decoding in reading programs for beginners than the previous sight method; Head Start and other federal programs; programs for children with learning disabilities; and "*Sesame Street*" and "*Electric Company*" ("Interview," 1985). Chall mentions, however, that "low-socioeconomic status (SES) children . . . begin to progress more slowly after about the fourth grade, when the reading material becomes more complex and abstract. The middle-class has a better chance of learning such ideas and words at home; the low-SES child can learn them too, but needs more help from school."

Finally, some large city school systems in recent years have made remarkable strides in increasing the scores of elementary students on standardized reading and arithmetic tests. Many of these strides are attributable to the reforms initiated, beginning in the mid- and late 1970s, by mainly minority educators in many locales throughout the country.

If incoming high school students are better prepared, will the problems of at-risk students and dropouts among Hispanics diminish greatly or disappear in the next several years? No, because Hispanics have such a long way to go to catch up with present national norms and rising norms in the near future. Other factors should also be considered. For example, Hispanics did not participate as heavily as other groups during the late 1960s and the 1970s in federal programs such as Head Start and, therefore, will not share as much in the positive, long-term effects of these programs that have been recently revealed (Rohter, 1985). Even today, for example, while 37.6 percent of white and 36.2 of black 3- and 4-year-olds are in preschool programs, only 23.5 of Hispanic 3- and 4-year-olds are in similar programs (Bureau of the Census, 1984).

Hispanics need good preschool programs more than ever. Since 1979 the poverty rate among Hispanics has been climbing steadily. The poverty rate for Hispanics under 18 in 1983 was 38.2 percent, compared to 17.3 percent for Anglos (Pear, 1984). Fifty-five percent of all Puerto Rican children live in single-parent households (Bould, 1985), and Hispanic children who live in female-headed families are more likely to live in poverty than either white or black children in the same situation. (The respective figures are 70.5 percent, 47.6 percent, and 68.5 percent). More black children, however, live in female-headed households, although even that dubious distinction is fast being approached by one Hispanic sub-

group: Puerto Ricans. Because of these grim statistics and the knowledge that preschool programs have had quite positive long-term effects with disadvantaged children, preschool programs and kindergarten for these children should be widely adopted. Without these and similar programs, the job of teaching Hispanic children will be that much more difficult and the gains that were made on the elementary level in recent years will be lost.

Closing Remarks

Over 20 years ago, Arthur Stinchcombe (1964) released findings from his investigation of student rebellion in a California high school attended mostly by working class youth. The major practical conclusion of his study was "that rebellious behavior is largely a reaction to the school itself and to its promises, not a failure of the family or community. High school students can be motivated to conform by paying them in the realistic coin of future adult advantages. Except perhaps for pathological cases, any student can be motivated to conform if the school can realistically promise something valuable to them as a reward for working hard. But for a large part of the population, especially the adolescents who will enter the male working class or the female candidates for early marriage, the school has nothing to promise." Stinchcombe added, "For the reason that the school cannot promise much is that the society cannot promise much" (p.179).

Apparently, our schools are still perceived by working class youth as not offering much. But it does not have to be this way, as many individual schools and localities have already shown. Local communities and school people are working together to change schools into small, humane communities in which respect, caring, learning, and hard work are valued and practiced by everyone. And, in turn, businesses and communities, working for their mutual self-interests, are developing opportunities for decent work and further education for *all* who graduate.

NOTES

1. The Commission was created by the Hispanic Policy Development Project (HPDP) in the months following the release of *A Nation at Risk* by the National Commission on Excellence in Education in April of 1983. HPDP released the Commission's findings in December of 1984.

2. Relying on this statistic for this age group, rather than the 18 to 19 group, is useful because it takes into account two factors that would otherwise create difficulties in deriving an estimate: (1) about 10 percent of each of the graduating classes of Hispanics in recent years was overage, that is, 19 years of age or older; and (2) an uncertain number of Hispanics, like other students today, "stop-out" of school for a period of time and then either return to high school or attain a G.E.D., equivalent to a high school diploma. However, there is a negative side to using this statistic as a proxy for Hispanics dropping out of American schools, because it would include young Hispanics who have recently immigrated into the country and are not high school graduates. We are not at all sure about an estimate for this group that could be taken into account in deriving an estimate for the larger group. Nevertheless, for other reasons, too complicated to discuss here, we will use the 40 percent figure as given by the Census Bureau. In any case, the larger the number of young Hispanic adults who have recently arrived in this country without a high school diploma, the more it is an issue for public policy.

3. Objections are often made about the use of these scores as performance outcomes for entire systems of schooling when only some of the graduating seniors take the tests. The objections are, of course, warranted and the full enrollment model discussed earlier in the text has been suggested as a way to meet these and other objections. But in lieu of anything better, these test scores will continue to be used. Of the students eligible to take the tests in the five states discussed here, Texas had 33 percent take a test; California,, 39 percent; Florida, 40 percent; New York, 61 percent; and Illinois, 72 percent.

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